

extends from a few miles north of Burujird to the walls of Urrni and far beyond, may with equal fidelity describe it as a land of abounding waters, a peopled and well-watered garden.

The direction of my journey has been fully indicated.

It is only from the descriptions of others that I know anything of the arid wastes of Eastern Persia or of the moist and malarious provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea, with their alluvial valleys and rice grounds, and their jungle and forest-covered mountains, or of the verdureless plains and steppes of Kerman and Laristan.

Persia proper, the country which has supplied the race which has evinced such a remarkable vitality and historic continuity, may be described as a vast plateau from 3500 to 6000 feet in altitude, extending on the east into Afghanistan, on the north-west into Armenia, and overlooking the Caspian to the north, and the Persian Gulf and the vast levels of Mesopotamia to the south and south-west.

To reach this platform from the south, lofty ranges, which include the *Jcotal*s of Shiraz, must be crossed.

From the Tigris valley on the west it is only accessible

by surmounting the Zagros chain and lesser ranges;

and to attain it from the north the traveller must climb the

rocky pathways of the Elburz mountains.

This great

"Iranian plateau," except in Eastern Persia, is inter-

sected both by mountain ranges and detached mountain

masses, which store up in their sunless hollows the

snowfall on which all Persian agriculture depends, the rainfall being so scanty as to be of little practical value.

Thus the possibility of obtaining supplies of water from the melting snows dictates the drift of population, and it seems unlikely that the plains of Eastern Persia, where no such supplies exist, were ever more populous than now. It was otherwise with parts of Central Persia,